

# SOCIAL ACTION

GRAHAM TAYLOR

Prophet of Democracy



Why will be

done on earth

B. H. WHITE

FEBRUARY 15, 1939



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The photograph of Dr. Graham Taylor on page 8 was taken by Helen Balfour Morrison. On Page 40 appears a reproduction of the Christmas card which was Graham Taylor's greeting from Chicago Commons in 1934.

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## In Memoriam

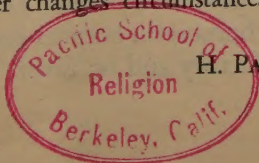
This number is dedicated to the memory of Graham Taylor. His long identification with the Middle West sometimes inclines us to forget his antecedents, education, and apprenticeship ministry in the Dutch Reformed Church; his distinguished Congregational pastorate in Hartford; and his service as Professor of Practical Theology in Hartford Theological Seminary.

But our memorial is not to be biographical. It takes, rather, the form of an exposition in the three following articles of some of the underlying issues and values, together with their related forms of service, to which Dr. Taylor dedicated himself through a lifetime of almost unique single-mindedness and steadfastness of devotion.

Dr. Holt, as an affectionate observer and interpreter, discerns and traces for us an integrated philosophy which was implicit in Graham Taylor's life. But with Graham Taylor himself practice was almost everything; system next to nothing. He came to the Middle West at its supreme moment of compulsory re-orientation. The westward trek, which hitherto had constituted the essence of American history, was just being stopped through the exhaustion of free land. The suddenly and crudely formed industrial frontier was taking urban form in the miracle of Chicago, around which the entire life of the rural hinterland was to be reorganized in rapidly succeeding decades. For the first time in the history of the region the problem of the relationship between the farm and village culture and the urban industrial invasion, sharply intruded itself upon the Christian conscience.

The career of Graham Taylor was the incarnation of this issue and its attempted solution by the oldest and most available resource of community life—namely, neighborly interest and good will. His simplicity merged with the triumphant popular mood of a region which had never known defeat. For forty-five years he dealt primarily with concrete social situations. His immediate viewpoint was determined by the place he had chosen for his home—the neglected backyard of a squat and smoky city. But, in the terms of these particular situations, he increasingly spoke to the whole city in the light of its ideal possibilities. From his vantage point at the very heart of the continent, he gave color and tone to successive generations of Christian ministries and constructive social effort.

Graham Taylor's originality was of the authentic sort—simple, objective, humble, experimental, always hopeful. And after all these are the abiding qualities, whatever changes circumstances may dictate in technique or organization.



H. PAUL DOUGLASS

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# The Social Philosophy of Graham Taylor

Arthur E. Holt

I Samuel, 9:6 *"Behold now, there is in this city a man of God, and he is a man that is held in honor; all that he saith cometh surely to pass: now let us go thither; peradventure he can tell us concerning our journey whereon we go."*

Samuel lived in three worlds; he lived in a world of God; he lived in the old world of the tribe which was passing and in the new world of the Kingdom which was just coming over the horizon. But for Samuel these worlds were not three worlds; they were one world. Because they were for him one world he walked back and forth between them and performed a ministry of interpretation and reconciliation which created a sense of *community*. For such a ministry this turbulent world has a perpetual need and it is of such a ministry I would speak.

## ***The American Dream***

Was born a theocracy in a village in an age of homespun. In simple churches, schoolhouses and colleges, preachers and teachers used the Bible and John Locke to prove: that a good state was good only when it existed for the well-being of the people; that a good government was a covenant between men and no government could remain good without the consent of the people; that there was a powerful good God in whose name they had the right to defy all oppression; that there was a law of nature and a law of revelation which gave a point of reference to defy man-made law. In all its Puritan history the American dream lost sight neither of the individual nor the community.

## ***The Village Grew Up***

The village post road became an international highway. The age of homespun became the age of high-powered production in factory and on farm.

The democratic economy of simple, useful labor became an autocratically owned system of corporations financed out of a highly centralized, privately owned, economic system.

As a result the 19th Century faced the problems accompanying industrialism and the growth of the great city which came to a crisis with the exhaustion of new land in the 1890's.

### *The Theocracy of the Days of Homespun and the Village Followed Several Paths:*

One group took the road of evangelism and began to explore the inner recesses of the heart. They later took the road of other-worldliness and began to dynamite the social order with the doctrine of the second coming of Christ. This doctrine shot religion into the sky. In its social expression it built orphanages and houses of refuge.

Another group followed the rationalists. They allied the doctrine of human rights and the divine right of property and became the fathers of American Babbity. God, for them, became a great help in the acquiring of wealth. This doctrine shot religion into the ground. In its social expression it had an enthusiasm for those institutions which helped the individual make good in his own name.

A third road was constructed by William E. Channing, Theodore Parker and Horace Bushnell, who sought to reconstitute the American dream in terms of a *community* which had railroad trains, factories and modern urban conditions. In its social expression it built neighborhood houses and social settlements.

In this latter succession comes Graham Taylor, minus the old dogmatism but still believing with Cotton Mather that God is the redeemer of persons and of corporate communities.

I believe I can tell the social philosophy of Graham Taylor in a series of verbal sketches which might be the theme of window panels in some future Graham Taylor Hall.

In the first panel I would gather up the theme of the the-

ocracy that, here on these shores, a commonwealth had been founded. I think the Mayflower compact in the ship's cabin carries the picture here.

In the second panel I would have something which symbolized the multitudes, those multitudes on whom Jesus had compassion, those multitudes whom Taylor loved in Hartford made up of the converts and the convicts, those multitudes of the River Ward in Chicago—the Irish and the Swedes, the Italians and the Poles, the hobos and the hard workers—those multitudes of the Orient and the Occident. Perhaps the picture of Graham Taylor sending Ozora Davis to preach in the city jail at Hartford could help us here.

In the third panel I would put a meeting at Orchestra Hall when Taylor and William T. Stead are speaking on the subject "If Christ Came to Chicago." On the stage, to use Taylor's words, would be business men and labor leaders, preachers and saloon keepers, gamblers and theological professors, matrons of distinguished families and madams from the houses of ill fame, judges of the courts, men whom the judges had convicted in the Haymarket Riots whom Governor Altgeld had recently pardoned. I would recall Stead's speech which began with a prayer "Oh, Lord our Father, help us this afternoon to understand something of the love that is in the heart of our brother Jesus." And I would let the picture further recall the fact that the meeting later broke up in a riot out of which came more public movements in politics and organized philanthropy than ever spouted from any similar meeting in Chicago.

In the fourth panel I would have Graham Taylor seeing the Holy City, not as the writer of the Book of Revelations saw it, but as Nehemiah saw it. Seeing it as the children of Israel, according to *Green Pastures*, saw the Holy Land. Graham Taylor never believed nor allowed anyone else to believe that Jehovah was going to hang the Holy City on a municipal Christmas tree. In this panel I would have Graham Taylor looking out from a loop tower with the city spread before him.

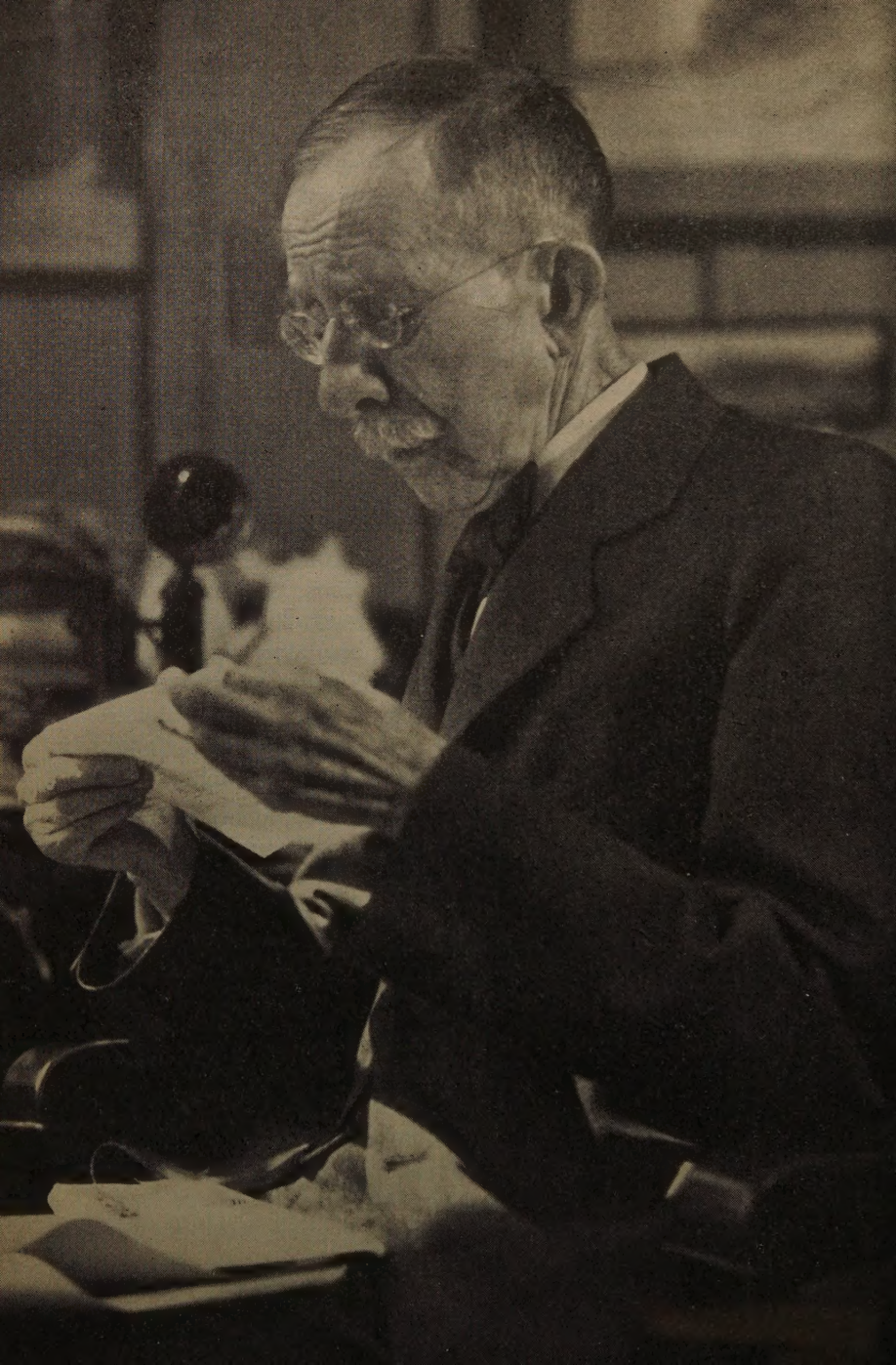
In the fifth panel I would have his family which fulfilled Horace Bushnell's formula, a family which was the agent and object of salvation. I would have his family going to live among neighbors and living so close to them that you couldn't tell where family left off and neighbors began. I would throw back the brick walls of a Chicago Commons and let people see that it was just a family trying to grow a neighborhood.

In the sixth panel I would have Graham Taylor as a teacher in Chicago Seminary, laying his commissioning hand on James Mullenbach who goes out and becomes the more than ordinary leader in the first municipal lodging house, the administrator of relief in the Cherry Mine disaster, the pioneer in industrial citizenship as impartial arbitrator in a great industrial experiment.

In the seventh panel I would have a school for democracy housed in a social settlement, a thought center in the midst of clashing wills, a combination of a village cracker-box club at the corner grocery store and a New England town meeting reconstituted in an industrial world, the one free forum in a day when newspapers were shouting anarchy, Communism and free love. I would have Dever, then a young lawyer, but later to become a great mayor, debating civic issues from the floor.

Perhaps the eighth panel would show Taylor, at his home in Ravinia, writing the last of his 1800 special articles for the *Daily News*, and I would have across the top of those editorials the word "democracy" for, as Nels Nordstrom who analyzed them discovered, they all dealt with political, social or economic democracy.

Then I would be bold enough to have a ninth panel showing Graham Taylor entering heaven. I would have him being greeted by a very human Christ of Galilee, the Christ of the fishermen, of the craftsmen and the shepherds. And I would have trumpeters but they wouldn't be angels. I would have a trumpet in the hands of Jane Addams, Julius Rosenwald, Governor Altgeld, Jim Mullenbach, Mary McDowell, George Cole and the members of the Municipal Voters League. And, though



I think I would give him an anvil rather than a trumpet for he could always get more music out of a hammer than a horn, I would include old Clarence Darrow and in the background, looking a little bit disturbed by the din, I would put in old Cotton Mather who wrote the *History of Boston, Related and Improved*—the first Puritan who saw a city as it was and as it ought to be—because he furnished the pattern for Taylor's 1800 editorials which might well be called *The Day by Day History of Chicago, Related and Improved*.

But more to the forefront and filling more of the picture I would place old John Woolman with his Journal—the Quaker with the tender heart who successfully placed himself, through the power of his imagination, in the place of the disinherited and the unfortunate and who recorded all his impressions in a deathless Journal. For after all, Graham Taylor's articles in the *Chicago Daily News* come nearer being the Journal of a man who, in a great act of self-identification had taken a great city into his heart and used his imagination in reconstructing a community of God in the midst of a community of evil.

What then, is the social philosophy of Graham Taylor? It is the philosophy of the early Puritan that God is the redeemer of persons and of corporate communities, a philosophy which holds that the work of God's redemption of communities is brought about not by imposing reform from without but by winsome persuasion from within. The cohesion of God's community is not a cohesion brought about by force and fear and a law imposed by the police, but a cohesion which is based on faith and trust, neighborliness and good will. This is the community which must ever be recreated at the center of all human communities.

This is the philosophy of Graham Taylor, the prophet of Democracy, for democracy is that kind of a community in which the cohesion is based on social trust and confidence, and achieves common purpose through persuasion and education and not through compulsion and fear.

# The Future of the Settlement

Lea D. Taylor

In the year 1831, when the total population of the United States was 12,866,000 or approximately the same as the population of the state of New York in 1930, a young Frenchman, twenty-six years of age, was sent by his government to the United States to study its penitentiary system. The keen, analytical mind of this young man was also alive to many other aspects of life in America. Coming as he did from a country still torn by the unsettled conditions of its great revolution and struggling in the midst of the current revolution of 1830, Alexis Charles Henry DeTocqueville was intensely interested in the characteristics and problems of the new democracy in America. His published work *Democracy in America* shows his faith in democracy as "an irresistible revolution which has advanced for centuries in spite of such amazing obstacles and which is proceeding in the midst of the ruins it has made."

DeTocqueville was concerned for the future of democracy, and wrote:

"When property becomes so fluctuating and the love of property so restless and ardent, I cannot but fear that men may arrive at such a state as to regard every new theory as a peril, every innovation an irksome toil, every social improvement as a stepping stone to revolution, and so refuse to move altogether for fear of being moved too far."

This comment was made a hundred or more years ago. Even then he observed that "men in the United States are in constant motion, but the mind of man appears almost unmoved." And he emphasized his feeling that:

". . . the first duty which is at this time imposed on those who direct our affairs is  
to educate the democracy  
to warm its faith if that be possible  
to purify its morals  
to direct its energies

to substitute a knowledge of business for its inexperience and  
an acquaintance with its true interests for its blind  
propensities,  
to adapt its government to time and place  
to modify it in compliance with the occurrences and actors of  
the age."

He adds the suggestion that the "right of association is almost as inalienable as the right of personal liberty," and he was much interested in the groups of citizens who were associating themselves together along various lines.

Of religion he says:

"Christianity which has declared that all men are equal in the sight of God, will not refuse to acknowledge that all citizens are equal in the eyes of the law. But by a singular concourse of events, religion is entangled in those institutions which democracy assails, and it is not infrequently brought to reject the equality it loves, and to curse that cause of liberty as a foe, which it might hallow by its alliance."

These comments of a century ago may serve as a base for the observation of our democracy today which presents within the context of a vastly more complex world many of the same problems unsolved.

Coming forward a hundred years, we find in the summary of conclusions on *Recent Social Trends* drawn up by the Research Committee appointed by President Hoover in 1929, an analysis of the problems of our country, with this statement of our outstanding problem as being:

"That of bringing about a realization of the interdependency of the factors of our complicated social structure, and of inter-relating the advancing sections of our forward movement, so that agriculture, labor, industry, government, education, religion and science may develop a higher degree of co-ordination in the next phase of national growth."

We find also an echo of the thought expressed a hundred years earlier by DeTocqueville in the Research Committee's "deep concern that in the midst of

an amazing mobility and complexity, there has run a marked difference to the inter-relation among the parts of our huge social

system. Powerful individuals and groups have gone their way without realizing the meaning of the old phrase—"No man liveth unto himself."

And again:

"Men cling to ideas, ideals, institutions, blindly perhaps, even when outworn. . . . The new tools and new techniques are not readily accepted. They are indeed suspected and resisted until they are reset in a framework of ideas of emotional and personality values as attractive as those they replace. . . . So the family, religion, the economic order, the political system resist the process of change."

The recommendation of the Research Committee is the need of social thinking—"the progressive clarification of men's thinking and feeling in their re-orientation to the meaning of new trends." There is, they say, "a need for new symbols to thrill men's souls," which harks back to DeTocqueville's call to "educate the democracy, to warm its faith, to direct its energies."

Today we live in a country in which, according to the study of Consumer Incomes in 1935-1936 by the National Resources Committee, we find that one third of the families and single people have an income of less than \$780 a year. Among this group which includes almost thirteen million families and single people, the mean income, or half-way point, is \$471 a year. The second third of our nation, including fourteen million families with incomes ranging from \$780 to \$1450 a year, showed a mean income of \$1076. Ten per cent of the non-relief families in the largest cities earned under \$780 a year and more than half earned less than \$1500.

What are the standards of living in this great bulk of our population? Where are they living? What are they doing? How are they participating in community life? What are they thinking?

In 1936 it was estimated by the American Youth Commission that every third unemployed person was a youth between sixteen and twenty-four years of age—a staggering total of 4,700,000 for the country as a whole, or more than one-fifth of the total population of that age group. At the present time educa-

tional facilities are wider spread and more available than ever before. For one student in high school in 1900 there are eight today. But education for what? A widespread survey recently made in Maryland by the American Youth Commission found many young people employed in "dead end" jobs, and forty per cent in semi- or unskilled occupations. There were few at work in openings which were of interest to them. What is ahead of youth in our democracy today?

The facts behind these questions form the background against which we are to consider the present work and the future of the settlement, for the settlement serves typical neighborhoods in which live those of the lower income groups.

In the midst of the social unrest of the middle eighties, the settlement was born of the desire of men to "educate democracy and warm its faith." Before that time a social conscience had been forcing its way to the foreground in England under the leadership of Charles Kingsley, Frederick Denison Maurice and Thomas Chalmers. The Oxford students who, under the leadership of Arnold Toynbee, responded to the call of Samuel A. Barnett for an understanding of the conditions of life in East London, threw themselves into the life of that community as much to learn from that life, as to help bring that community the opportunity to learn the way of progress. This new approach to community problems led Canon Barnett to place over the fireplace of Toynbee Hall, the first settlement, these words: "No propaganda but good-will." The demonstration of the quality and force of *neighborliness* as a factor in community life has been so simple that it has had to face the fire of misunderstanding from those who see progress only through some sort of propaganda.

The settlement has aspired to be a center where various faiths, races and viewpoints might find respect and opportunity, and might in the process grow in understanding of those from whom they differ, and demonstrate the possibility of working together for the common good. Such practical demonstration be-

comes a leaven which works through other community forces into community life. Since the settlement movement has been termed "a way of life," we understand it perhaps better by surveying some of the principles which underlie its work, rather than by outlining its program. For a settlement which is close to its neighborhood has no fixed program, but as Paul Kellogg has put it "is grounded in and changes with its neighborhood, drawing in its neighbors, and promoting self organization along natural lines."

Residence in a neighborhood, "living," as Miss Addams has defined it, "quietly with neighbors until there grows up a sense of relationship and mutual interests" has given to the settlement residents the status of citizen voters in the local community. They know conditions of neighborhood life the year round, the daily, the Sunday and the holiday life. They live with the traffic hazards, the street and alley conditions, the industrial encroachment upon home life. They see the struggle to maintain family life in deteriorating dwellings. They have seen the struggle to maintain a decent standard of living under almost impossible circumstances. They are conscious of the lure of demoralizing forces, and the inadequacy of public or private provision for constructive recreational opportunity. They know the community life over many years, in and out of those problem-situations which may call for attention from specialized social agencies. They meet people informally in natural groups, in the stores, on the door steps, and in the family and community social life which they share. They know the prerequisites and problems of local government in its basic unit, the precinct and the ward. The local cultural groups, the associations for mutual benefit frequently meet in the settlement. The life of the neighborhood, regardless of whether or not such a term is recognized by the sociologist, is nevertheless real in the settlement community, even though it may be broken into units of fellowship. And the settlement group is constantly re-discovering its neighborhood.

Since it has always recognized the "right of association" as a basic right, the settlement has worked with natural groups, and with the natural interests of groups in the community. As a "general practitioner" in an age of specialization, it has tried to see life whole. From the beginning it has served all the age groups of the community, and both sexes. Through its contacts it has tried to create better understanding within the family and within the community of older and younger ideas, of first generation immigrant backgrounds and second generation American contacts. It has fostered the growth that comes from interests held in common.

In developing cooperation within the group, and between divergent groups, the base is laid for a better understanding of the need of participation in active citizenship. Leadership finds opportunity for development within the settlement, and such leadership has in many instances throughout the country become significant in the life of the community. Within any group there is a constant process of democratic adjustment between individuals and factions. There is the possibility of the cultivation of varied interests which will broaden life, and the stretching of horizons to include some knowledge of the city and of the social problems in which the citizen finds himself involved. Since recognized needs vary, and since interests and mental levels also often vary, the progress of a group may be slow or rapid, but cannot be hurried. It is necessary for the settlement to cultivate a "time patience" and an historical sense which will note progress not by weeks and months but by years, but also to stimulate dynamic leadership and further the contagion of ideas.

The place of the individual within or without the group is recognized by the settlement. Personal friendship, recognition of ambition, of frustration, of need of guidance, form a basis for work with the individual, often by someone with special skill or training.

In addition to knowing its neighborhood, and developing

participation in neighborhood life, the settlement tries to relate its knowledge of neighborhood conditions to the basic problems which affect the standard of living and the process of government.

By assembling information from neighbors—with their help—and by pooling such information on a local or national scale, the settlement has made a contribution to some of the social problems of the day. Through such factual data it has tried to get a human understanding of conditions as they affect family life, and to stimulate among neighbors and the citizenry in general such social action as may lead toward re-making community life on a more just and humane basis.

Looking at the life of our country and of the world of today, one sees several basic needs:

to have the democratic process so related to the life of the people that it will be easily understood, and so clearly defined that the people will stand under it in spite of pressures that may come, or in spite of demonstrations of its misuse which they may see at work in their own community;

to get our citizenship to see life as a whole, to interrelate its parts not only in the family and community life, but in our national life;

to develop techniques of work, of education, which will bring vision to the democracy, and "warm its faith" or give it "new symbols to thrill men's souls";

to help create locally, and in the country at large, an awareness that the level of life in a community, a city, state or nation is determined by its average standards of living, of opportunity, of education, of citizenship, and that no whole is greater than its parts;

to extend efforts toward the maintenance of peace and the upholding of justice in the world outside our borders.

The settlement can be but one of many forces at work in a neighborhood. It cannot reach all the people. It cannot always arrive at goals. But it can have goals. It can develop methods. It

can demonstrate procedures. It can experiment. It can learn from others. It can dare to fail. It can try to keep its feet on the ground and its head above the turmoil of city life. From its base of working with the community, without propaganda, to discover near-by ways of making the world a better place in which to live, the settlement can do these things if it has leadership with vision. Moreover, it can learn some of the causes underlying present problems of the world as reflected in local community life and work toward constructive measures which may help the future.

In simple ways the settlement can help relate the democratic process to the every day life of people.

A child comes into its nursery school at three years of age. He has been the despair of the mother by an insistence upon remaining dependent, refusing even to try to feed himself. Life has been unhappy not only for him but for the family. A few days in the nursery school and something happens. The other children have gone on independently in their play and meals. He begins to observe that he is left behind, and that his protests are not important to anyone. He decides that it may be better to follow their lead, and suddenly the bond that held him snaps. The process of working with others has begun. It is a long and patient job to carry that progress into the home, but with the cooperation of the mother it is finally done, and the family life grows immeasurably.

In a play group of little children six to nine years of age, one child accustomed to dominating others and gaining his ends by force, gradually discovers that in order to get help with something which he wants very much to do, he must in turn help others in things which interest them, and the give and take of life becomes a part of his consciousness.

A Christmas program is being planned. Different groups of boys and girls bring ideas. One group will give a play, the chorus will sing carols, a group of minstrels will appear. Scenes of the nativity will be dramatized, but such dramatization takes

boys and girls of different ages, so volunteers from different groups agree to help. Some take stage parts, some help with costumes, some with scenery, and others with the programs. The cooperative process brings into a common project diverse groups, all trying to make the whole more beautiful. This group participation is not a new idea, but it takes skills in leadership and is a process needing emphasis in all phases of community life.

A club ardently discusses what it will do next. A majority has one plan, a minority holds out for another plan, and a battle impends. Can the issue be settled without war, and without too much compromise? Can a skilled leader help the group to see the values of each plan, and perhaps the following through of both ideas, taking one first? Or possibly a new plan may evolve from the discussion in which all will be interested? Is the facing of such issues clearly and objectively a process of democratic education?

Young people in a city-wide settlement group want to stay together, want to learn something of life, but lack insight and procedures which will help them to function as a group. Starting with elemental discussions of the problems which face young people today in love and marriage, the group grows in strength and direction, and can now chart its own course reaching out into the broader problems of the community, and coming face to face with illustrative material out of immediate experience at work and at home.

In an English class of young people recently come from a fascist land but eager to become American, the lesson relates itself to those factors of American life which they will soon have to face. "Why are ashes left in the alley? What sort of houses are fit to live in? Why are children ill when rooms have no outside air? What happens when a machine replaces ten men in an industry? What can you do about it?" It is possible to learn English, and at the same time to learn something of the problems which our coming generation of citizens must learn.

The wage-hour law has recently set a base for wages—twenty-five cents an hour as a minimum wage basis to a minimum standard of living. But a certain industry in a settlement neighborhood has been paying only half the minimum to its workers. When it shut down temporarily, one of the workers, a member of the mothers club, told what had happened and asked what might be done. She was asked to bring other workers from that and other shops to discuss the situation in the settlement. At first, the group of seventy women and girls, negro and white, more older than younger, felt that the law should be altered, or that an exception should be made which would permit them to work at a wage which ran from sixty-five cents to a dollar and thirty cents for a whole day's work. The law was explained, and its benefits to others were pointed out. The cost of living was analyzed, and the fact made plain that public taxes must supplement such a wage if the family was to exist.

Slowly in successive meetings the group worked its way along one of the most perplexing problems of our industrial era, finding strength in fellowship, visiting the employer for information, gradually realizing that some of the group could not hope to compete in industry because of age or incapacity, and must probably cease working even if giving up work meant acceptance of relief.

When the industry reopened and announced that it would pay the minimum twenty-five cents an hour, the wage was based upon a requirement of more than a maximum output for each worker. The strain of this increased pressure on health, on eyesight, and on nerves proved serious, and those women who were re-employed stayed together to discuss this further problem. After much discussion they formed an independent club which makes possible any joint or delegated action which may negotiate with the employer a work load which the women consider possible. The gradual dawning of the consciousness of the value of association in this exploited group is a demonstration of the democratic process at work in elemental ways.

In a settlement tolerance for divergent individual thought and action is possible while maintaining cooperation in the work of the settlement where varied viewpoints are presented.

For example, while a settlement board member was sincerely convinced that unemployment insurance legislation was impractical, a staff member and some neighbors were working for an unemployment insurance bill, and another group of neighbors in the house was advocating a measure of much broader scope. Interests held in common made more possible mutual consideration of the personal viewpoint of the other.

These instances are few, but they indicate, perhaps, some of the ways in which the settlement helps to relate the democratic process to the life of the people.

The second need,—to get people to see life as a whole—is more difficult. The standard of living within a family is clearly related to the amount of education and the amount of medical care which will be possible for the children. To get the family outlook broadened to the point of concern for others within the community, and to arouse interest in joint effort to secure remedial measures, is one of the problems which lies ever before us. In the case of the women of the industrial groups mentioned above, the original request was for the personal aid of one person. In that instance it was possible to show that one person alone would accomplish very little. Only through a real recognition of need does joint effort grow easily. But unless there is a growth of intelligent interest upon the part of people in the fundamental issues before our country today, the people might easily be swayed by the promises of a possible fascist element, which would profit by the lack of intelligent interest of a citizen group.

Seeing life whole is essential in a democracy. It requires knowledge of facts. It calls for vision, for understanding, for action. My father, Graham Taylor, had this capacity to see life whole. The analysis, written by Nels F. Nordstrom as a thesis for the Chicago Theological Seminary, of the weekly signed editorials

which my father contributed to the *Chicago Daily News* each Saturday night from November, 1902 regularly until 1937 and occasionally through the subsequent year, shows this wide vision of a democracy interested in the wholeness of life. Almost half the articles deal with political and civic problems, the majority pointing the way to constructive action within the city itself. Others of the editorials portray the social problems of the city, covering in range most of the problems on which concrete knowledge or action was needed, recounting what this or that political unit, social agency, or individual was or was not accomplishing, and endeavoring to make articulate the inarticulate body politic.

That citizens must be interested in their city and their country and their world was to him axiomatic. All his life long, and especially through this weekly contact with the great newspaper public, he felt the obligation to "warm its faith," to lead it and to stimulate it. His last public concern was that an article should be finished, and one of his last requests was for a summary of the news of the world, and for the news of the churches.

The vitality of his interest was dramatic and contagious. The living issues he described concerned every human being, and he felt should be the concern of everyone. To keep abreast of the local situation he never failed when absent from the city, to have the *Chicago Daily News* sent him. I shall not forget his contempt for a fellow Chicagoan whom he met in Florida, who would not even glance at the Chicago paper when it was placed near him, and who refused to discuss the issues of the day. To my father these issues meant life itself. To all citizens, but especially to settlement boards, residents, volunteers and neighbors, such a widespread interest in life needs to become basic. To have a "mind that moves," that reaches out beyond its immediate contacts, that can sense the vital wholeness of life itself, is as necessary for all groups concerned with the settlement process, as for its neighbors and for the world at large.

Methods of work which may help bring vision grow where

flexibility of program and a concern for educational values are combined with a leadership alive to the issues of the day. One cannot read the books by Jane Addams, Lillian Wald, Robert Woods, Mary Simkhovitch, and Graham Taylor, without sensing the fertility with which growth took place in the communities with which the settlement worked. The authors would have shied away from the term "technique," but it is evidenced in the chapter on "Education by the Current Event," in Miss Addams' *Second Twenty Years at Hull House*, and in the chapter on "Between Class Conscious Belligerents," in Graham Taylor's *Pioneering on Social Frontiers*, and in many other instances.

Such experimentation continues today. It is not heralded abroad, but is being plowed into the every day associations of the settlement with its neighbors. Settlement and neighbors together are helping to think through the ways and meaning of interesting others. A "talking slide" to dramatize current issues is developed in one house. A credit union grows slowly out of an attempt by a boys club to raise money for a member who was in trouble. A group of mothers becomes interested in the price of milk and follows through with others to an experimental cooperative. Across the barriers of nationality and of interests, groups work together toward a common goal, and no matter how simple that goal may be, the process is there. Many neighborhood and group experiments are being quietly tried. Some of them fail, but serve as stepping stones toward later efforts. Participation makes community life more real, and may help the people themselves develop some of the "symbols that thrill men's souls."

Out of its first hand experience, and with the help of its neighbors, the settlements have attempted to create in the community at large an awareness that the welfare of the country relates to some extent to its standard of living and the well-being of its citizenship.

When in the spring of 1928 neighbors, unemployed though able-bodied, kept coming to the settlement for aid in finding

employment, it became obvious to settlement leaders that an unusual situation was developing. Times were prosperous. Industry was booming. Dividends were rolling in. But people accustomed to work could not find jobs. A brief census of our groups at Chicago Commons showed twenty-five per cent of our employable people unemployed. At a settlement conference in June of that year, similar conditions were reported from widely scattered cities.

The National Federation of Settlements determined to find out what was happening to family life in so-called prosperous times. Before April 1929, facts were gathered from settlements all over the country. These facts portrayed the frantic search for jobs, the realization that none would be forthcoming, the severe cutting of family expenses, the neglect of health, the curtailment of recreation and of education, the psychology of fear, the futile struggle, and the final call for help. Today we all know the story, but then it was unbelievable. When just after the stock market crash in the fall of the year, the book *Case Studies of Unemployment*, and its popularized story by Clinch Calkins *Some Folks Won't Work* was published, scorn greeted those who said that jobs were not to be found, and who felt that something far more inclusive than private relief efforts was needed to meet this situation. Settlements felt the rush of the on-coming storm and gathered in advance facts which were of use in helping to build public defenses when the crisis became acute.

Early in 1931 when anxiety and worry were bringing unbalance to the citizens of Chicago, the settlements through their neighbors and in cooperation with one or two other groups, sponsored public hearings in six sections of the city, where all the elements of neighborhood life—the landlord, the tenant who could not pay rent, the insurance agent, the milk man, the nurse, the grocer, the family welfare worker, the employed and the unemployed—each had a chance to tell a jury of citizens what was happening to family and neighborhood life in the

panic then in full swing. The facts brought out at these hearings helped to convince Chicago that public aid by state and federal government was desperately needed to conserve both individual and family life. The groups of neighbors and others who formed that nucleus developed into an organization of the unemployed which has functioned throughout the depression.

As the depression continued, and as the discussion of legislative measures got under way, the settlements sponsored a study of family life under unemployment insurance in Great Britain, and published a booklet which was helpful in the early stages of the discussion of such legislation here.

Realizing keenly the heavy burden which illness brings to the low income group, the settlements once again felt that more factual knowledge was needed about the effect of British health insurance on family life, and the opinions of the medical group serving in it.

Therefore, last year a young doctor and his wife spent some months in England on the Barnett Fellowship which is sponsored by British and American settlements, and interviewed many families, doctors and officials in addition to studying the health insurance law.

Just now, as Congress is likely to begin public hearings on proposals for a wider extension of medical care this report has been published for the National Federation of Settlements in book form, called *Health Insurance with Medical Care* by Douglass W. and Jean Walker Orr, with a preface by David Lloyd George. Throughout this country, settlements are gathering information from neighbors on the health burdens of low income families. This information can also be of service in giving balance to other reports which may be made from other sources.

These studies are mentioned because they show that the settlement with its ear to the ground has heard and known some of the problems facing our whole country, early enough to

gather facts, to stir initiative, to interpret, to testify, to act, and to get others to act along lines which may build constructively for the whole country.

What of the future of the settlement? One has but to look at the world of today, and see the extent of the forces which are counter to everything for which America has stood, to feel strongly that everything which can work toward the conservation of the principles of democracy needs to be strengthened.

At a recent meeting of the Board of the National Federation of Settlements, the breadth of its interest was reflected in the discussion which centered on such subjects as the need of making democracy a positive force in relation to the anti-Semitic feeling appearing in certain local neighborhoods, the need of providing shelter for some of the refugees from other lands and backing the efforts of governments in caring for uprooted peoples, the need of cooperating in movements for peace and justice;—as well as on the need of adequate relief for dependent families, the hazards of illness for the low income group, and the need of protection against sweated labor and child labor.

In my father's book published in 1936, *Chicago Commons through Forty Years*, there is this statement:

"The future functioning of the settlements may be reckoned both by the continuance of certain needs which they have hitherto helped meet, and by plainly discernible tendencies demanding more than ever the distinctive qualities and capacities which they not only possess but are ever developing."

Childhood is cramped, youth is at the crossroads. Families are bewildered by sudden changes and by less than minimum budgets. Unemployment remains with its unwanted leisure. Industrial relations call for intelligent understanding of larger issues. Narrow and prejudiced viewpoints touch the settlement at all angles. Free speech and civil liberties languish. There is need of every attempt to educate for a democracy, which as Thomas Mann has put it, is "inspired with the feeling and consciousness of the dignity of man."

Surely there is need for centers—non-partisan and non-sectarian—which can keep close to the life of the people, which can be aware of the intricate factors in community life, which can help develop educational methods to strengthen the understanding and participation of the common man in his community and in his government.

The future of the settlement hinges upon a leadership aware of these trends and opportunities, with knowledge of what can be counted upon from public resources; a leadership which, while keeping a firm base in the life of the community, maintains an experimental approach and flexibility amid changing times.

There is need for a center which may have the warmth of personal friendship. There is need for the understanding of many viewpoints. There is need for strengthening participation in community life. There is need for local interpretation and action on some of the great problems of this complex world. The settlement may not function along all of these lines, but with its neighbors it is free to develop ways of living which may lead toward a more just world.

The words of the Christmas card of the fortieth year of Chicago Commons point out the direction:

The goodwill to understand one another; to interpret misunderstood attitudes and situations; to reconcile and be reconciled to differences of taste and temperament, race and religion, heritage and aspiration, and through service and sacrifice to promote the unity of spirit in the bond of peace—this is the way toward the peace of God that passeth all understanding. Such is the meaning of our forty years' experience here. Is it not now the hope for the best that is yet to be everywhere?

Christmas, 1934

GRAHAM TAYLOR

# The Assumptions of Democracy

Charles E. Merriam

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Democracy is a form of political association in which the major decisions upon the political policy of the commonwealth are habitually determined by the bulk of the community.

What are the assumptions of democracy, and what are the ways and means by which these assumptions may be validated in the policies of a community, and in their administration? I am stating democratic theory in a form perhaps not recognized as orthodox by all the high priests of democracy. The principal assumptions of democracy are as follows:

1. The essential dignity of man, the importance of protecting and cultivating his personality on a fraternal rather than on a differential principle; and the elimination of special privilege based upon unwarranted or exaggerated interpretation of the human differentials.
2. A constant drive toward the perfectibility of mankind.
3. The assumption that the gains of commonwealths are essentially mass gains and should be diffused as promptly as possible throughout the community without too great delay or too wide a spread in differentials.
4. Popular decision in last analysis on basic questions of social direction and policy with recognized procedures for the expression of this decision and its validation in policy.
5. Confidence in the possibility of conscious social change accomplished through the process of consent rather than by the methods of violence.

## I

An assumption of the doctrine of democracy is that of the essential dignity of all men and the importance of protecting and cultivating personality primarily on a fraternal rather than on a differential basis.

It is, of course, quite possible that under various systems of

social or political order the dignity and worth of all men might be fully recognized and amply protected; or *per contra* that mass rule might give merely lip service to the doctrine. But, in general, the practice has been otherwise. In a caste system, such as that of India, the lower castes may be respected but in a very lordly manner; and when we reach the pariahs the dignity remaining is very minute. The untouchables must not even cast a shadow upon the higher types of mankind—their betters. Slave-owners may also manifest deep interest in their slaves and respect the dignity of their slave personality, but in other instances sell them like chattels or beat them like dogs. Patrimonial rulers may also exhibit fine types of patronage to their serfs and tenants, but again there are many pictures of sad neglect and haughty treatment unworthy of the dignity of the race.

Even the nineteenth-century attitude toward the majority of the people—the poor—in England seems almost incredible today, so callous was it in nature. Preachers, economists, lords and ladies thought of the "lower classes" only to scoff at their ill manners, and to assail them for daring to protest at their God-given lot. Lord Shaftesbury, in a speech before Parliament in 1864, quoted "a lady complained that she could not have her chimneys swept in the afternoon, because the boys were at school: 'A chimney sweep indeed, wanting education! What next?'" And there are many other instances of the same type of reaction.

It is quite evident that the given rulers felt relatively little or no responsibility for the condition of the majority of the human beings under their governance. Nor were they far removed in spirit from those individuals who showed their idea of the nature of poverty by enacting in 1697 a law to deter "idle, sturdy, and disorderly beggars" from seeking public aid, an act by which every pauper—man, woman and child—was made an object of public notice and scorn. For on the shoulder of the right sleeve of the outermost garment each was obliged to wear, in red or blue cloth, a Roman P, as well as the initial

of the parish of which he was a resident—a veritable badge of poverty and shame.

Later on, when the question of a ten-hour day for adults was raised, Bright, a prominent employer objected:

Why are we mill-owners . . . to be selected as subjects of interference? Why is a Scotchman to be sent to see how I work my people, while the farmer, and the carpenter, and the builder, and the tailor is left to the ordinary responsibilities of law and public opinion? . . . I have advised my partners, if this machinery Bill passes, to set the example of turning the key on the doors of our mills, and to throw on the legislators the responsibility of feeding the millions whom they will not allow us to employ with profit.

The nineteenth century is rich in examples of upper and middle class indifference to the welfare of the masses. Brute force was the favorite remedy for popular misery; intelligent understanding was rare.

Typical of the ideas of the monarchs of the time is the following statement of Charles Felix of Savoy, "At the beginning of my reign (1820) everything was a mystery to me. I did not know what to write or what to answer. Then I made the sign of the cross, recommended myself to the adorable Trinity, and God willed that my decisions should be worthy of a Christian prince."

To believe in the concepts underlying democratic government was a criminal offense.

The words liberty, justice, happiness of the greatest number are infamous and criminal: they give to the mind the habit of discussion and of distrust. This fatal habit of distrust once contracted, human weakness applies it to everything, man comes to distrust the Bible, the orders of the Church, tradition, etc., etc.; from then on he is lost.

In France the upper classes felt that "action is more persuasive than words . . . to discuss the laws in public is to rob them of that respect which is the secret of their power."

In Austria the same view prevailed. Robert Owen, for example, relates his conversation with M. Gentz, secretary of the Congress of Sovereigns, in 1817.

I stated that now, through the progress of science, the means amply existed in all countries, or might easily be made to exist on the principle of union for the foundation of society, instead of its

present foundation of disunion, to saturate society at all times with wealth, sufficient to amply supply the wants of all through life. What was my surprise to hear the reply of the learned secretary! "Yes," he said, and apparently speaking for the governments, "we know that very well; but we do not want the mass to become wealthy and independent of us. How could we govern them if they were?"

In Russia conditions were even worse. "Sporanski . . . when Governor of the province of Penza, brought to justice, amongst others, a proprietor who had caused one of his serfs to be flogged to death, and a lady who had murdered a serf boy by pricking him with a penknife because he had neglected to take proper care of a tame rabbit committed to his charge."

"'Very good,' the Grand Duke Mikhael said once of a regiment, after having kept it for one hour presenting arms,—'only, *they breathe!*'"

It must also be readily conceded that under nominally mass rule systems, attention to the lot of great groups of population may leave much to be desired in factory, mine and farm. In the earlier forms of popular rule, the bulk of the population was excluded from the voting circle and slavery remained for the blacks. This was done, it might be maintained, not because the mass was in power but because they were not in fact effectively in authority; a relatively few interpreted their own private interest in terms of the relatively many. Nevertheless the system of democracy points steadily in the direction of this goal, even if it is not reached thus far. Lincoln said of the Declaration of Independence, it is an ideal "constantly looked to, constantly labored for, and even though never perfectly attained, constantly approximated, and thereby constantly spreading and deepening its influence, and augmenting the happiness and value of life to all colors everywhere."

The fraternal basis of life has been weakened in recent years by such influences as race hatred and the doctrines of the racial differentials, notably in Germany, and further by the tendency toward private regimentation and exploitation in great concentrations of economic power reaching over into the political

field. In many areas sad ravages have been made on the doctrine of human comradeship. But on the other hand, sweeping progress has been made through the emancipation, in part, of womankind, through the closer human relationships in cities and in mass industries, through the organization of labor, through the democratizing of many spheres of life formerly held as the preserve of few. In the field of transportation, of dress, of art, of education, of recreation, of health, the status of the individual has been elevated materially and in many ways so imperceptibly that the advance of social democratic mores has not been perceived.

Democracy cannot yet say even approximately that to every human being there has been allotted some small but precious part in the reconstruction of the society of which he is a part, but ideally it is headed in that direction, however slow the advance may be.

The doctrine of liberty underneath its procedural trapping is essentially that of opportunity for free development of personal desires for expression. Who says liberty says life—richer and more abundant life. Liberty, Bryce has said, is an end in itself, but it is more than that. It is also a means of arriving at other ends, a method of expression of personality—a mode of obtaining recognition and possibly rising in the hierarchy of values in the society.

When the procedures of alleged liberty stand in the way of the throbbing interests of life, it is time to reconsider their form and application, to see whether what was intended as a release has become a restriction, whether Shylock is demanding his pound of flesh according to the law, but contrary to the basic purposes of the law. When the rich or the powerful publicly invoke liberty as a means of private exploitation of the poor and the weak, it is time to examine the nature of the forms and procedures and the spirit in which they are applied before we accept these invocations at their full value.

It is not necessary to the doctrine of the dignity of mankind that every man should be equal to every other man in everything,

or that every man should be able to do everything he may desire at any time. These are no part of the assumptions of democracy, and only stand in the way of the achievement of the larger program. It is the larger and ampler regard for the position of the human personality in the general scheme of values which lies at the root of the assumptions of democracy. This persistent factor in all of its program includes insistence upon placing the substance of human personality above the forms of its protection—often a puzzling phenomenon to those who seem to have covered the personality legally but find it cruelly exposed in other and unexpected ways.

The doctrine of democracy is not one of leveling down primarily, but of building up to a minimum level, and of cultivating the possibilities in all ways of life. It discards traditional status and emphasizes creative capacity or dynamic ability. Far from crushing out talent, democracy may place the highest premium upon it, and strike at all artificial limitations. Most differentials are not inherited, but must be established and earned pragmatically in the given society in a given cycle of its development and in the given direction of its social objectives. In the political world selection should not be determined merely by the fact of inheritance, but by the test of demonstrated capacity. In general the dead hand is not presumed to control the living present.

It is an essential in any mass program that differentials in ability be recognized and that they be given an appropriate place in the grand plan for the intervaluation of human services. The emphasis of democracy is not on the flat egalitarianism of all men, but on the equality within certain fields, such as equality before the law, equality in suffrage, equality in opportunity, in dignity, in basic minimum of life.

It is easy to say that all men are not created equal. It is easy to find widely disparate IQ's, and far-ranging differences in skill and capacity in almost every walk of life. But on the other hand it is easy to see that many bruised and broken lives might have been saved if society had taken its obligation to mankind

more seriously. Any physician is furnished with proof of this, and, indeed, he need not be a physician or a psychiatrist to observe that man's inhumanity to man has blunted many lives.

If the possibilities of modern science and modern organization were utilized in practice there would be an end of any section of population unformed or malformed in body and mind and soul. There is no excuse for the existence of a "lumpen proletariat" in our day, except that of our inattention or of greed—or of cynical acceptance of a condition now outgrown. This might well be blazed in letters of fire wherever modern civilization holds sway, and made the first step in the formulation of any modern social policy.

When this is once accomplished, there will still remain differentials in human capacity in many ranges of activity. Some of these differences will be found in the field of political competence; some in science and invention; some in art; some in the field of production and organization of commodities and services. These differences in ability will be differently rewarded in accordance with special needs in differing phases of development. There are many worlds in which many types of prestige may be developed so that the leader in one world is a follower in another. There may be, and indeed are, many true "orders of nobility" in the many ways of life in which differentials are found. These differentials do not or need not stand in the way of a system of democracy except as men acquire positions of undue privilege and begin to obstruct the opportunity of others.

It is not the purpose of a system of democracy to iron out all human differentials, but on the contrary, it is a part of the program to cultivate and enrich human capacities and variations at many points where they are kept back by neglect. It may be found necessary from time to time to review and revise those differentials that bear directly on the general purpose of the system, as is seen in minimum wage legislation, or progressive income taxes, price or profit regulation, or other differentials touching closely the inner workings of the commonwealth.

While the fluid forms of prestige such as that represented by

money income may be more easily regulated by the state, the special types are far less readily reached. The governor cannot well regulate the prestige of the musician, the poet or the artist, or fix the range of esteem for the scientist and the inventor. He may say what salary the great general may have, but cannot vary much the esteem in which he stands in the community. The limits here are soon reached, and prestige may retreat into inner domains into which the most penetrating authority cannot find its way.

The persecutions of the Jews with their enormous treasures of intelligence have been the work of the aristocratic systems of Spain in its tragic era of persecution and of the Nazis in their glorification of race superiority and individual differences.

That the mass may misjudge a system of differentials or meddle with it is, of course, possible and has happened, but it is not inevitable and characteristic of the plan as a whole.

## II

It is assumed that there is a constant trend in human affairs toward the perfectibility of mankind. This was plainly stated at the time of the French Revolution and has been reasserted ever since that time, and with increasing plausibility. Inventions and discoveries which Condorcet could not have foreseen or even imagined have created a new world of abundance alike in the fertility of soil, in the productivity of machines, in facility of organization and management. The era of plenty has taken the place of the era of scarcity in many parts of the world, although not in all; but human thinking lingers in the earlier phase of our tragic experience stretching over the centuries of want.

What is the ultimate goal? The goal is the *leveling up* of the standards of human living to a point far beyond any thus far attained even by the aristocrats themselves. Since the days of the French Revolution the doctrine of the continuing perfectibility of mankind has glimmered in the minds of the leaders of the mass movement, and has animated them to continue

the struggle in this direction. Thus far the human lag has been very great.

In one sense poverty may be considered a relative term in any distribution of income, but in another there are sordid desolations of humanity which may be eliminated forever from the experience of mankind. That there will always be differentials in capacity is not a valid pretext for ending the most obvious handicaps to the unfolding of human personality and for low-level forms of education, housing, surroundings that are a disgrace to the human race in our day. In a sense it may be said that democracy, more than any other system, is concerned with abundant production of commodities and services—as much concerned with production as with distribution.

### III

It is assumed that the gains of commonwealths are essentially mass gains and should be diffused through the mass by whom they were created as rapidly and as fairly as possible. In a political unit such as a modern nation this becomes clear in time of great national stress. Men are called upon to give up their ordinary occupations, to risk their lives, in defense of what is clearly recognized as a common cause. In these moments the meaning of the commonwealth stands out clearly, without any successful rival. The same is true of moments of tension outside of war, as in a great famine, plague, flood or other disaster.

This doctrine does not assume that each individual contributes the same as every other, or that all should share on an identical basis; but that the production of civilization is a community enterprise in which all participate. If there are those who demand the public protection, heritage and advantages of the nation and are not willing to subordinate their private claims to it, they are in an awkward position; for they seek all the profits and none of the losses in a common enterprise. There are those who insist that the gains of civilization are essentially the creation of a few men who are the great benefactors of the nation or society in which they live, and that though others may be con-

tributors they are so only in a minor and subordinate way. From the mass point of view, on the contrary, the land, minerals, water resources, human resources of the nation are "of the people" as a whole in first instance, and in priority of claims. The nation has not only the right of eminent domain over land but also the right to draft persons for war, and the right to make rules for what it conceives to be the common good. This may, it is true, be assumed likewise by anti-democratic systems, but with a different principle from that of guidance by the common will.

The assumption of democracy is, then, that the total gains of commonwealths are mass gains produced by common effort, and that these gains are to be enjoyed by the mass which made them possible. This is not to deny that either contributions or rewards may be unequal, but to assert that broadly speaking national gains are nationally produced, the outcome of a joint effort in war and peace, pointed toward the common good.

#### IV

The next assumption is the desirability of popular control in the last analysis over basic questions of policy and direction, with recognized procedures for the formulation of such policies and their execution.

It may be asked, who shall decide what are "basic questions," and who shall determine whether the ways and means of expressing the mass will are appropriate and effective? We cannot go farther back than the "general understandings" of the community, always the judge of the form and functioning of the legal order in which the system is set. Locke's doctrine that the people are always sovereign, although "not under any form of government," has puzzled many political mechanics, but it contains an element of truth which cannot be disregarded. Participation in the making of decisions upon basic questions is one of the protections of the amateur against the professional, of the mass against the specialized class who take on the function of administration for them, and sometimes forget who is

master. The responsibility of the ruler to the ruled has been one of the historic battle grounds of popular government, and its instrumentation appears in many forms in many lands and times. Mass judgment as a means of determining community policy is vigorously resisted both in theory and in practice by the apostles of aristocracy.

Evidently no political association would be concerned with the fixation of all human value systems, for many of these are so intimate in their nature as to be almost inaccessible except in times of extraordinary tension, and others are so numerous and varied as to be incapable of successful administration by any one kind of grouping. Some human values will be sharply fixed by the government; others more remotely regulated or affected; others will be supervised in a general way; others regarded only as they seem to interfere with the course of the nation, threatening it in some important particular.

If a given interest seems to imperil the community by overweight in the economic field, or in the ecclesiastical field, or become defiant of the association's basic principle in any field, the group may care to take appropriate action to restore the balance of social values.

The wisdom of the government will under such circumstances be measured by the balance kept between its community needs and the degree and type of regulation exercised. Every overregulation will bring its own antidote in the form of resistance, sabotage, low morale, and possibly overthrow of the powers that be, while failure to act may jeopardize the position of the state and destroy its unity of purpose and vigor.

In an aristocratic state the same principle will be followed, but with this difference, that the policy of intervaluation will be determined by the few frankly rather than by the many. The few will be the judges of whether their value system is advantageous to the whole community and to themselves. If it is difficult for the mass to deal fairly with the few, it must also be admitted that it is even more difficult for the few to deal fairly with the many.

## V

The next assumption is that of confidence in the possibility of conscious social change, accomplished by consent rather than by violence. An aspect of democracy is confidence in the efficacy of government as a conscious and deliberate social organizer. The formation of a political constitution was ridiculed by savants of the nineteenth century, even, as wholly impossible. Constitutions grow, it was positively asserted, and cannot be made by man. At one time the anarchistic doctrine tended to prevail, and it was widely believed that the ideal condition would be that in which there would be no organized political order whatever. This still remains the anarchism of Proudhon and of Tolstoi, and a conspicuous point in the creed of the soviets, who foresee the end of all governmental organization, remote as it may appear at the moment.

In various periods also the government was identified with tyranny and efforts were made to provide restrictions against government on the theory that whatever it did would be bad; and that the less done the better. In more recent times, however, it has been realized that government may be the friend of the community as well as its foe; that popular government is not to be confused with personal or aristocratic government; that a weak government face to face with social situations in which action is urgent may itself be a danger to the stability and progress of the nation. Where governments have not acted vigorously and progressively they have exposed themselves to danger of overthrow, as in Italy and Germany. In these instances a stronger type of political action might have averted violence and revolution. The distrust of government, which a century or so ago was characteristic of the many who feared the encroachments of the few, is now more characteristic of the few who fear the encroachments of the many upon their special set of values.

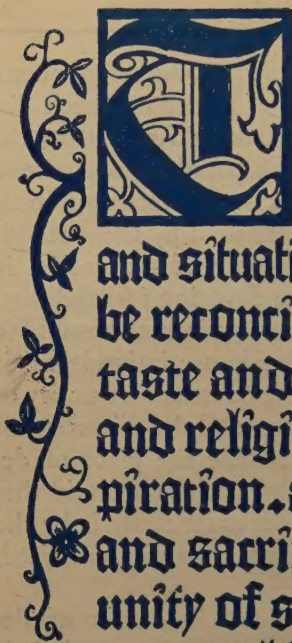
The regard for mechanisms of government designed to protect individuals in their civil rights and the community against arbitrary action by despots still survives in undiminished vigor

in democracies. But the type of rule which produces impotence in dealing with broad questions of social policy has been discarded in all doctrines of democracy looking forward to the instrumentation of the avowed goals of popular government.

Furthermore, conscious social change is to be brought about by the process of peaceful consent rather than by the methods of violence. Freedom of discussion, freedom of association, in a relatively peaceful atmosphere, are the favoring preconditions to make popular consent possible. Obviously it is impossible to obtain a mass decision if those who decide are intimidated, if they are not in a position to consider the questions of policy or personnel at stake, if violence and duress, and the distortion of facts by the agencies of communication take the place of deliberation and free choice. It was Bentham who once said that the liberty of a people is measured in ultimate analysis by the facility with which the acts of government may be criticized, discussed and reversed.

These assumptions constitute the theoretical basis of democracy. The program of democracy is directed toward their validation through specific mechanisms, and in particular programs. But the underlying principles are standards by which special procedures and the policies of the moment are to be evaluated. These assumptions taken together make up the working philosophy of democracy, as it is evolving historically.

From time to time some of these principles have been and are claimed by competing types of political association. Paternalism may desire the conservation of human powers and resources, or regard paternally the dignity of mankind, theoretically. Aristocracy, old or new, may regard itself as the trustee of the community and endeavor to administer the gains of civilization according to its lights. But there is no guarantee that these concessions will be made even in theory, or that more than theoretical lip service will be paid to them. The promise of their fulfilment without the determination of public policy by the community and without the consent of the governed is a fading hope.

he goodwill to understand one another. to interpret misunderstood attitudes and situations. to reconcile and be reconciled to differences of taste and temperament. race and religion. heritage and aspiration. and through service and sacrifice to promote the unity of spirit in the bond of peace—this is the way toward the peace of God that passeth all understanding :: Such is the meaning of our forty years' experience here. Is it not now the hope for the best that it is yet to be everywhere?

Graham Taylor

Chicago Commons  
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